



# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

OCTOBER 1996



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*Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.*

## THE SOUTH INDIA CHURCHMAN

*The Magazine of the Church of South India*

**OCTOBER 1996**

*Editor Incharge, SICM*

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### Prayer for the Church

Guide and direct O Lord, the minds of  
who work for the reshaping of the church in  
time. Restore our faith and vision. Renew  
our energies and love. Revive your people to new  
life and power. So may we live and speak  
of Christ in the world he came to save, and even  
advance his kingdom, for his honour and glo-

Ame

*-Timothy Dudley-Smith*

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# **Letter from the Editor Incharge**



Dear Readers!

Greetings to you in this Golden Jubilee Year of the Church of South India. I have asked a friend about what is needed for the church during his important year. The friend suggested Spiritual renewal of the church. Today the call is Spiritual renewal of the Congregations. The question is now? There is an important prayer in the Bible: Psalm 85:6: Will you not revive us again, so that our people may rejoice in you? This text is often used to urge prayer for revival. It contains a number of factors essential to a spiritual awakening.

## **c. The means of securing renewal is through prayer:**

The people of God pray in order that there might be revival. They know that the source of renewal is God. It is God who revives. But people need to ask God earnestly and sincerely. It has been amply proved in the history of the church that when the church prays things happen. Prayer is an important channel which God has provided to the church to communicate with God and with one another. There is an old saying that prayer changes things. This does not mean a superficial saying. It means believing and doing what was been asked for. Prayer combined with expectancy can be a right means of securing revival.

## **b. The agent of revival is God:**

God is the one who can bring changes. 'Will you?' No one but God can bring true revival.

## **c. Renewal takes place through us:**

The necessity for revival is our feebleness. A revival is a result of cooperative effort. There is

an effort on God's part. But all is not dependent on God alone. It is possible to limit the initiative of God. There must be an effort on our part. Our part includes praying for revival; preparation for revival; enthusiasm for revival; and participation in revival. Nothing does more good to the church than revival. A revival heals breaches and restores harmony. It calls out all the strength of the church. The existence of the church depends upon revival. Revival is an ongoing process. The church needs to be revived all the time with new visions and new perspectives and new directions.

## **d. Results of Renewal—We rejoice in God:**

Your people may rejoice in you? A revival is not a cause but a result. Physical achievement means compliance with physical laws such as gravity, attraction, inertia and leverage. Mechanical results come from use of mechanical means. Spiritual results come from compliance with spiritual laws. To produce spiritual results, one must use spiritual means.

Spiritual Renewal of the Congregations means renewal of Christian families, which in turn needs the renewal of Christians as individual persons. Jubilee is a time of rejoicing. We can truly rejoice when fruits of the spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control are seen in action in our inter-personal relationships in the family, in the congregation and in the society. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

*Yours in God's service,  
REV. DR. P. SURYA PRAKASH*



# An Ecumenical Jubilee: What it Might Mean for the Churches

KONRAD RAISER\*

## Introduction

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED that in opening up a reflection among the member churches of the WCC about the Eighth Assembly in 1998 and its theme, I might focus on the motif of an 'Ecumenical Jubilee' and what it might mean for the churches. As you know, the Central Committee of the WCC has confirmed by postal vote that the theme of the Eighth Assembly should be: 'Turn to God — Rejoice in Hope.' This formulation, which had already been considered seriously at the last Central Committee meeting in Johannesburg in January of 1994, was finally retained over against a number of other possible formulations because it seemed to express most adequately the biblical motif of the jubilee which had been accepted earlier as the focus for preparing the assembly.

The Eighth Assembly of the WCC in Harare will indeed be a 'jubilee-assembly' taking place fifty years after the first assembly in Amsterdam in 1948. In common English usage 'jubilee' refers to a special anniversary and carries with it the connotation of joyful celebration. Surely, the 50th anniversary of the WCC should also be an occasion for joyful celebration, but the reference to the biblical jubilee motif goes far beyond this everyday meaning. It so happens that the constitution of the World Council of Churches suggests that assemblies should be held normally in intervals of seven years. The Eighth Assembly will therefore come after 'seven weeks of years' corresponding directly to the biblical stipulations for the jubilee year in Leviticus 25. Further exploration of this initial analogy has indeed provided important inspiration for approaching the event of the Eighth Assembly. The theme 'Turn to God — Rejoice in Hope' is proposed not so much as an affirmation for study and reflection, but as an evocative indication of a direction and as a source of inspiration for daily Bible studies as well as for the

liturgical and spiritual life of the assembly. It is the intention of the Assembly Planning Committee that the jubilee motif should provide the framework for planning and shaping the content of the assembly.

Since these decisions of the governing bodies of the WCC, Pope John Paul II has issued an Apostolic Letter to the bishops, clergy and lay faithful of the Roman Catholic Church 'On Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000' (see *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, Vatican Press, 1994). The second chapter of this letter (pp. 9-16) develops the concept of the jubilee with reference to the two thousandth anniversary of the birth of Christ. The biblical explication of the jubilee offered by the Pope shows the rich meaning of the motif in the biblical tradition which is then being translated into the outline of an impressive process of spiritual and liturgical preparation for the year 2000. In fact, since the year 1300, the Roman Catholic Church had begun to reappropriate the biblical tradition of the jubilee year as an occasion for a general remission of debts which in the medieval church became the occasion for special indulgences. Since the late 15th century, the Catholic Church has been celebrating every twenty-five years as a 'Holy Year' of which the last was celebrated in 1975 with the main focus on reconciliation. Following this tradition, the year 2000 is to be celebrated as a special Holy Year, that is, 'the Great Jubilee'. The holding of the Eighth Assembly of the World Council in 1998, only two years from the end of the millennium, and the parallel focus of the jubilee gives added significance to our question: An Ecumenical Jubilee — what might it mean for the churches?

## Biblical Reminders

What is therefore the background and the meaning of this biblical notion? The central point of reference is the 25th chapter of the book of Leviticus where the 50th year to follow on seven sabbath years is being called a 'jobel' year (Lev. 25:10). The meaning of the Hebrew word 'jobel' which has been rendered in the Latin translation

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of the Bible as *jubilaeus* is unclear. What we learn from chapter 25 in the book of Leviticus is that the jubilee year shall be opened on the day of atonement by the sound of the trumpet and that the opening of this year shall be a proclamation of 'liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family' (Lev. 25:10). [The day of atonement (Lev. 23:27ff) where Israel is to clean itself of all sins, is to be followed five days later by the festival of booths (Lev. 23:34ff) which is the traditional harvest festival of Israel.] The central stipulation that in the jubilee year everyone shall return to their property is combined further with the intentions of the sabbath year, that is, there is to be no sowing or harvesting so that the land can enjoy a complete rest (v. 11). No land in fact shall be sold in perpetuity, for 'the land is mine' (v. 23) and all ownership is only that of a tenant or trustee.

The jubilee year and the sabbath year belong to the same tradition: Leviticus 25 is part of the Holiness code (Lev. 17-26) which is one of the three collections of ancient Jewish legislation — the Book of Covenant (Ex. 20-23) and Deuteronomy. The Covenant code is the oldest of these collections reflecting the situation of an egalitarian community of free peasants. Deuteronomy comes 200-300 years later reflecting the social development under the monarchy, that is the emergence of a money economy, of class differentiation and taxation. The Holiness code dates probably from the exilic period after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. The sabbath year occurs in all three collections (Ex. 23:10ff, Deut. 15:1ff, and Lev. 25:1 ff) but is reinterpreted in the light of changing conditions. The basic notion of the sabbath tradition is a regular period of rest for the land, the animals and the servants (Hebrew *shabat* = to cease, to rest). In the context of Deuteronomy, this basic notion is extended and reinforced by the idea of 'remission' with regard to debts and slaves (the Hebrew words *shemitta* and *samat* mean to withdraw the hand, to let loose, or to liberate). This new interpretation is a response to the distortion of social relationship through an imbalance of power and an accumulation of wealth. The sabbath year is intended to restore just relationship in society.

Under again radically changed conditions, Leviticus 25 has taken up the same tradition. Here the remission of debts and the release of slaves is demanded only every fifty years, an unrealistically long period. The main focus now is placed on the restitution of the original distribution of land property for all families. We have no direct evidence that the jubilee year was actually observed, even though there is some evidence that the programme of

reconstruction under Nehemiah followed the jubilee principle (Neh. 5:1-13). This could suggest that the concept of the jubilee year emerged at the end of the exile in Babylon in the situation of an impending return of the exiles. The time from the destruction of Jerusalem to the edict of Cyrus announcing the possibility of return was approximately fifty years. The jubilee year, therefore, expresses the vision of a new beginning, a return to the order of community life instituted by the will of God. This is underlined by the fact that the jubilee year is to be proclaimed on the day of the atonement.

The intention of the biblical jubilee was to break periodically the inevitable historical dynamic of acquisitiveness and domination leading to exclusion, and to restore the opportunities for life in community to all. Already in the prophetic tradition (Isa. 61 : 1-2 and Ezek. 46 : 17) the jubilee had become a symbol of salvation. As such, it was reappropriated by Jesus who used the sabbath and the jubilee tradition as a concrete representation of the coming kingdom of God, extending its promise beyond the Jewish people to those considered outside the covenant. In the first sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:18-19), Jesus proclaims liberty in quoting Isaiah 61 leading to the affirmation: 'Today this word of Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing' (Luke 4:21). The specific sabbath rule of the cancellation of debts, which already in Leviticus 25 is integrated into the jubilee framework, is reflected in the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:12) which thus becomes a jubilee prayer. Forgive us our debts as we forgive who are indebted to us (the Greek word for the act of forgiving is used to render the Hebrew found in Isaiah 61 to express the 'release' of captives and prisoners). The parable of the unfaithful servant (Matt. 18:23ff) indicates that in ancient society the failure to repay debts could lead to the loss of liberty. A further echo of the jubilee message is found in II Cor. 6:2: 'See, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation,' which follows directly on the proclamation of reconciliation. Through this reappropriation of the jubilee tradition, the Utopian legislation of Leviticus 25 was transformed into a powerful prophetic vision of the new life in community in the horizon of the kingdom of God. The periodicity of the sabbath and the jubilee year is radicalised in the eschatological now or today. Any moment can become the year of God's favour, the time of salvation. Now is the time for liberation, remission, forgiveness, reconciliation. It is God who offers the jubilee of healing and restoring life, of forgiveness and liberation from bondage. This is the 'revolution' of the gospel which leads to a transformation of values and a genuine reconstruction of community.

## Some Echoes of the Biblical Jubilee Motif in the Church and Beyond

The tradition of the biblical jubilee has inspired new appropriations in the course of history. The early patristic theology reinterpreted the sabbath by celebrating Sunday as the day of resurrection of Christ and the beginning of the new creation. The period of fifty days or weeks, that is, the jubilee period, led up to the feast of Pentecost seven weeks after Easter, celebrating the outpouring of the Spirit and the birth of the Church. Pentecost is thus the fulfillment of the celebration of new life which was inaugurated at Easter. The fifty days of celebration following Easter have to be taken together with the fifty days of repentance during the Lenten period preceding Easter. They form the full liturgical context in which the Orthodox Church until today relives the ancient biblical jubilee.

In the introduction, I have already referred to the new reception of the jubilee tradition by the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages. While the celebration of holy years was initially closely linked to the notion of indulgence, the emphasis has more recently moved to spiritual renewal in the love of God, faithfulness to the gospel, reconciliation and commitment to justice and compassion in human society. Very often the jubilee or holy years have been occasions to affirm Roman Catholic integrity, notably in the year 1950 with the promulgation of the most recent mariological dogma and the encyclical *Humani Generis*.

A more direct reappropriation of the Old Testament motif of the Jubilee is visible in sermons and religious writings in the context of the 19th century struggle for the emancipation of slaves in the United States. Several African-American spirituals from that period sing of a 'year of jubilee'. The proclamation of the emancipation of slaves in 1863 was interpreted as the beginning of a year of jubilee. In this context it might be important to note that the liberty bell in Philadelphia, one of the great symbols of the American revolution, carries the inscriptions quoting from Leviticus 25:10: 'Proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.'

Following the same line, the Old Testament jubilee motif has been reappropriated most recently in reflections coming from the context of the historic peace churches. Here the radical imperative of the jubilee prescriptions, that is leaving the soil fallow, cancelling debts, freeing slaves and redistributing capital, have been applied to the structures of injustice which characterise relationships within and between societies today. In particular the imperative to cancel debts has been used as a biblical reference in discussions about the global debt crisis.

A few examples of a contemporary reappropriation of the biblical jubilee tradition might be added. Thus the Korean churches are celebrating a jubilee year in 1995, that is, fifty years since the end of the Second World War and the division of the country. Their hope is that this year will inaugurate the process of the reunification of Korea and the reconstitution of national unity. Major celebrations are being prepared for August of this year. The Swiss churches declared the year 1991, in which the anniversary of the establishment of the Swiss Confederation 700 years ago was being commemorated, a jubilee year or 'Hallijahr' and they appealed for a collection of 700 million Swiss francs to be used for the repayment of international debts which were being owed to Switzerland. Finally, there is an Asian-African initiative to mark 1998, the year of the WCC Assembly, a jubilee year to commemorate the five hundred years since Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape in South Africa to reach the Indian Ocean. This initiative calls for the cancellation of debts, for the restoration of land to the original owners and for the repatriation of what was taken away by the colonial powers.

These examples of reappropriating the biblical jubilee motif show the potential but also the limitations of a reference to Leviticus 25. Using the jubilee motif today could be understood as appealing to a Utopian imperative and thus raising expectations which are unlikely to be fulfilled. Important as the social, economic and ecological aspects of the jubilee motif are, they must be linked in the preparatory reflection leading up to the WCC Assembly with the New Testament dimensions of forgiveness and reconciliation as the way to the reconstitution of community. The basic thrust, however, in all these appropriations is the notion of an interruption of the flow of events, the initiation of a moratorium in order to redress, to reorient and to reconstitute. This could become the starting point for the thematic focus of the assembly. The 50th anniversary should be used as an occasion for the ecumenical movement, for the churches and for the WCC to reflect and to reassess its life. The aim of this moratorium would be to proclaim liberation and to practice reconciliation and forgiveness. The assembly could thus become the occasion for an act of manifesting the oneness of the Church of Christ, for the Church is his and not ours.

### An Ecumenical Jubilee — What Would It Mean Today?

Building on the explanations and reflections offered so far, a number of aspects emerge which should be worked into the preparation of the assembly.

1. An ecumenical jubilee would mean to seize the anniversary year of the World Council of Churches as a time under God's promise, as a year of 'God's favour'. Earlier formulations of the assembly theme had tried to

capture this sense of a *kairos* with the formulation 'now is the time,' which had already been used to structure the message from the Seoul Convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in 1990. But the same emphasis on affirming God's favour is included in the invitation 'Turn to God'. This echoes the biblical invitation to *metanoia* (repentance), interrupting the flow of 'business as usual' and affirming God as the source of life, of wholeness and of hope. Instead of the moralising connotation of repentance, the turning to God suggests a change of allegiance, of liberation from other powers and captivities. This is not an invitation to return to God in the sense of going back, but to return to the one who is always ahead of us with the promise of true life.

The invitation to 'rejoice' emphasises the anniversary year as an occasion for celebration and thanksgiving. In the original Hebrew context, the joy of the jubilee was connected with the return from exile. It was the joy about the grace of a new beginning. In the Christian reception, inspired by Jesus himself, the jubilee becomes the parable for the joy of the kingdom of God, the beginning of a new creation. While there are reasons for joy about the achievements of the ecumenical movement, the invitation to 'rejoice' should always be seen in this wider context.

Finally, the assembly theme is intended to inspire hope. The constant reinterpretation and reappropriation of the original sabbath and jubilee year regulations carries the hope that the expectation of life in its fullness, of which the jubilee year is a symbol, can be fulfilled. Today in your hearing this message is fulfilled... now is the time... Christian hope is an expression of eschatological realism against the tendency of resignation and fatalism or the cynicism of power.

2. The jubilee signifies the return to the covenant order of God. All the key concepts begin with 're': repentance, remission, restitution, reparation, restoration, regeneration, recreation, reconstruction, rebuilding, reconciliation. However, this return (*metanoia*) is not a turning backward, but a reordering and reorientation which opens the way out of the house of bondage into the household of life. It is an invitation to return to the future, to be liberated from the bonds of the past and to embrace the promise of life. In a widely noted report the French 'Group des Dombes,' an ecumenical study group in the tradition of Abbe Couturier of Lyon, has issued a call for the 'conversion of the churches'. This call is based on the conviction that the particular identities of the churches, marked as they are by the history of division, need to be transformed by a process of conversion, of turning to the common source of the churches' identity, that is, Jesus Christ. Already seventy years ago, the Stockholm

Conference affirmed: 'The closer we draw to Jesus Christ, the closer we come to one another.' Conversion, therefore, means to be liberated from the bonds which tie the churches to the past and to turn to Christ who is always ahead of us, to follow Christ. The assembly could then become an occasion to spell out the call to Christian discipleship today.

3. The ecumenical jubilee is a call for the reordering of the life of the churches, for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation and for the restoration of communion. 'The land is mine,' we read in Lev. 25:23; 'with me you are but aliens and tenants.' This is being reinterpreted in the New Testament which invites us to be no longer aliens and strangers, but full members of God's household, the Church. However, this household belongs to God and there are no exclusive property titles. An ecumenical jubilee that would mean rendering the Church, the ecumenical movement, back into the hands of God, cancelling all debts, all mutual condemnations and being released into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The continuing separation of the churches is deeply rooted in unconfessed and unforgiven sin and guilt. What separates the churches is not only doctrine and practice, but acquiescence in division and the defence of particular identities. Forgiveness, therefore, requires a reconciliation of memories, of active and common remembrance of the past. This could be extended to the liberation from the feelings of guilt connected with five hundred years of colonisation and two hundred years of Western missionary expansion. The confession of guilt and the acceptance of forgiveness and reconciliation is particularly relevant for his history of the 20th century which has both been the most destructive period in human history and the time when the ecumenical calling of the Church has been rediscovered.

The assembly could thus provide the framework for a ritual of confession, forgiveness and reconciliation — for an act of unity at the end of the millennium of division and Christian expansion. It could be a reaffirmation of the JPIC process leading up to a recovenanting of the churches.

4. Only churches which have responded themselves to the jubilee call and reordered their lives and their relationships accordingly can dare to issue the jubilee call toward the wider human community. The year 1998 will also be the culmination of the Ecumenical Decade 'Churches in Solidarity with Women.' The Decade has brought to the surface the widespread reality of violence against

women in church and society. The Decade has thus become a test case for the readiness of the churches to respond to the call for the restoration of community in the one household of God.

Central to the biblical jubilee is the self-limitation of power exercised in terms of property titles and domination over slaves. The sabbath and the jubilee year call for a self-limitation in the exercise of power in order to restore a sustainable order of human community. Violence in any of its forms is an expression of the uncontrolled excess of power which destroys relationship in human community. The reappropriation of the biblical jubilee motif, therefore serves as a strong reinforcement of the ecumenical commitment to work towards the overcoming of violence.

5. The jubilee focus on the redistribution of land, that is, of the basis of sustenance of life, could sharpen our ecumenical reflection about a theology of life. The land, the earth, belongs to God who provides for our livelihood. All people are entitled to what they need. This basic biblical affirmation finds expression in the imperative to redistribute the land, to create productive activity and to give the land back to God from whom it was received. This symbolises the restoration of the integrity of creation respecting the sanctity of life as a gift from God. An ecumenical jubilee would mean accepting a new form of life which reflects a deepened understanding of creation and of the place of humanity within God's creation. Already the Canberra Assembly had reflected about a new ethic of economy and ecology, insisting that the orientation towards growth and consumption had to be replaced by the values of sustainability and use. Since then, the insight has grown, not least in relation to the threat of accelerated climate change, that a profound social, political and spiritual reorientation is needed, a genuine paradigm shift. An ecumenical jubilee could become the moment of a firm common response of the churches to this challenge.

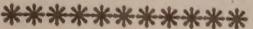
6. The announcement of the jubilee is placed in the framework of liturgy and worship. The jubilee is proclaimed through the sound of the trumpet of the day of atonement. The whole jubilee legislation can be interpreted as an example of the 'liturgy after the liturgy.' This echoes the prophetic witness about true worship (Isaiah 58) which is

being affirmed by Jesus in his teaching about the sabbath (Mark 2). The patristic tradition has interpreted the jubilee in the light of the resurrection and the outpouring of the spirit as the manifestation of the time of salvation, of the fullness of life offered by God. This could lead us to a new reflection about the inseparable relationship between worship and spirituality and the efforts to reconstruct human community.

The ecumenical jubilee of the year 1998 could thus find its continuation in preparing the churches for the year 2000 in the spirit of true worship, binding together spirituality and the commitment to restoring right relationships in human community. The assembly should lead to a solemn recommitment of the churches to a life which responds to the message of Jesus in his first sermon at Nazareth.

### Conclusion

We have begun to realise that the Eighth Assembly, the jubilee assembly of the WCC, will have to provide a fresh articulation of the ecumenical vision as we move into the 21st century. We are in the midst of a process of transition and business cannot continue as usual. As we are searching for new paradigms and for a new vision which will inspire a new generations, the jubilee motif could serve as a crystallising and integrating focus. It would thus not be a theme to be considered as such and to be spelt out in various issues or discussion at the assembly. Rather, it would serve as a matrix helping us to articulate the elements of a new ecumenical vision focusing on the reconstruction of viable human community and right relationships. Many times we have described and redefined the goal of the ecumenical movement. We have designed strategies only to discover that the goal had vanished into a more distant future. We are approaching the end of the second millennium, the period of Christian division, and the end of the century which has seen the emergence of the ecumenical movement. This is indeed a *kairos* and we should not lose the sense of expectancy and urgency. The Eighth Assembly of the WCC must be a time of liberation, opening the way for the ecumenical movement into the future of the 21st century. Thus it would truly become an ecumenical jubilee.



## *L.M.S in the Task of Nation Building:*

REV. JUSTIN CHARLES

The missionaries of the erstwhile L.M.S. have left indelible mark in the minds of the people of Travancore for their contributions to the progress and development of Kerala. Not even the name L.M.S. (London Missionary Society) is used officially both at its home base in London where the body has been reconstituted as C.W.M. (Council for World Mission) and at the former 'mission fields' where the administrative and other responsibilities had already been transferred to local bodies. In Kerala the Christian community established as result of the L.M.S. work now known as Dakshina Kerala Mahayidavaka (South Kerala Diocese) formed part of the indigenous Indian church named the Church of South India (C.S.I.).

The Dakshina Kerala Mahayidavaka is celebrating the bicentenary of the formation in 1795 of the L.M.S. and the 190th anniversary of the founding on 25th April 1806 of the L.M.S. Church, the day when William Thobias Ringeltaube, the first L.M.S. missionary entered into the region of South Travancore. On this auspicious occasion celebrating the bicentenary of the L.M.S. work it is so befitting to pay tributes to Vedamanickam Maharan, Dalit Christian hailing from Mylaudi about 12 k.m. east Nagercoil. Though the beginning of the L.M.S. Church Kerala is most associated with the pioneer European missionary, W.T. Ringeltaube, the recent research on this subject has brought to light that it was Vedamanickam who founded the nucleus of the protestant Christianity in the whole of Kerala even before Ringeltaube arrived. History records that Vedamanickam embraced Christianity at Tanjore the then missionary headquarters in South India in 1799 on his way back from his pilgrimage to a Hindu shrine at Chidambaram. He brought the new religious faith to his village. As the work flourished in and around Mylaudi he felt the need of a 'Saippu' to give guidance to it, so he went back to Tanjore in 1806 and brought Ringeltaube who just landed there.

It cannot be denied that the motive of any Christian missionary society was to christianize the people. Therefore, there is a common criticism that they used social services

as a means to that end. In many cases it is not far from truth even. But, in the case of L.M.S. work in South Travancore, history does not record that there was any kind of pressure on the people to embrace the new religion. However, many joined the Christian fold as the missionaries promised them of a prosperous future - spiritually and temporally. Whatever works the L.M.S. did and still continues to do for the betterment of the people have been a contribution to the nation. Therefore, the present context warrants a survey of the areas in which the L.M.S. was actively involved in the nation building task.

**Pioneers in Education:-** One of the major spin offs the L.M.S. work in South Travancore was the spreading of literacy among the backward and slave castes, exploding the myth that education was the preserve of the upper castes. If the state of Kerala is proud of its high percentage of literacy now, the abiding honour should go to Ringeltaube who laid the foundation for the introduction and diffusion of Western education. Charles Mead who succeeded him is remembered even today for his yeoman services to the cause of education in Kerala. By improving his predecessors plan for education he prepared the way for making Travancore a land of literacy. Undoubtedly it can be said that the schools started by the pioneer missionaries kept up a good standard of education. The elementary schools were gradually upgraded so that they could offer advanced studies. How many of the present generation know the fact that the present University College in Trivandrum was the 'Free School' started by the L.M.S. in 1834!

The promotion of female education was a new chapter in the history of Travancore. Offering education to lower caste girls at a time when even higher caste girls were not permitted to take up public education was in fact a revolutionary and a bold step.

The missionary aim with the kind of educational system they introduced in Travancore was liberation of the future generation - liberation from ignorance, superstition, oppression, squaller and poverty. What the

L.M.S. schools were doing was providing the pupils with the knowledge to earn their livelihood and stand without depending on others. Therefore, it was with this aim that both boys and girls were taught many trades like paper making, printing, book-binding, weaving, lace-making, embroidery, spinning, manufacture of sugar and rearing of silk-worms along with the regular courses in arts and science subjects. There is no exaggeration in saying that those schools had been instrumental for a renaissance of the 19th century education system that fixed limitation to educational freedom on the basis of caste, creed and sex.

The literary activities of the L.M.S. was prodigious indeed. Literary activity was boosted by the establishment of printing presses. From 1853 onwards many monthly magazines were published that helped the emancipation of the people faster. The highest tribute paid to the printing establishment of the L.M.S. in South Travancore was the Maha Raja's desire to establish a Government Press at Trivandrum, after he paid a visit to the Mission Centre in 1834 and saw the schools, press and the advance made by the lower castes.

The Dakshina Kerala Mahayidavaka as the former L.M.S. is known at present is not at all lagging behind the missionaries in education work. It has a good network educational institutions – 1 Arts and Science College, 1 B.Ed. College, 6 High Schools, 5 Upper Primary Schools and 53 Lower Primary Schools. Also the Mahayidavaka is running five technical training centres to train young men and women in different technical trades so that they might find out their own livelihood for their future. In the matter of imparting education the Mahayidavaka has not neglected the physically handicapped. The school for the deaf and dumb at Valakom, the school for the Blind at Varkala and the School for the polio-affected children in the L.M.S. compound, Trivandrum are keeping good standard of education.

**Pioneers in Medical work:**— While education was devoted to liberate people from illiteracy and ignorance, medical work was meant to liberate people from physical pain, suffering and diseases. This was a time when people of Travancore only had the access to the native physicians. Also this was a period known for the notion that sickness and ailment were very often attributed to the anger of gods who had to be appeased and propitiated with sacrifice and libations of blood. The lack of advanced medical facilities both in remote villages and towns caused many to suffer and left them uncared for. Epidemics caused hundreds of people to death. It was this pathetic social condition that compelled the L.M.S. to do medical work

of which the pioneer missionary was Dr. Archibald Ramsay who arrived in Travancore in 1838. He established hospitals and such other medical centres throughout the region of south Travancore from Nagercoil to Kottarakara. The popularity of the mission hospitals further widened by the coming in 1923 of Dr. Theodore Howard Somerwel who is known for his loving concern for the poor and needy patients. The mission hospitals did and continue to keep up better standard of treatment. Since most of the mission hospitals had good medical facilities with modern medical equipments and dedicated doctors and other medical staff, there is no exaggeration say that the number of patients came for treatment to the mission hospitals were more than that of the government hospitals. Introduction in 1930 of radium for the treatment of cancer in the Neyyoor Mission Hospital and the fact that Neyyoor hospital was the only one in the whole of India to have a cancer ward during that period is a proof for the extent to which the medical work of the Mission had progressed. In order to give good services to the people and to create awareness among them that they had responsibilities to the suffering and to raise local leadership in medical service, L.M.S. made arrangement for training local people in nursing and compounding. Thus they started medical schools. After 1934 Higher Grade Course in Nursing in English was started in Neyyoor hospital and Kundara hospital. At present the Dakshina Kerala Mahayidavaka has 8 full-fledged hospitals and many medical Sub-Centres. Every year a good number of trained nurses are coming out of the L.M.S. Boys Brigade Schools of Nursing at Kundara. Their services are beneficial all over in India and abroad.

It cannot be denied that medical work in the formative period had been a means of evangelization, but at the same time it should also be admitted that it had rendered a very important service to the poor, ignorant, illiterate suffering masses of south Travancore at a time when the government had not provided sufficient medical aid. Medical work as a service to the nation is being continued by the 'Medical Mission' of the Dakshina Kerala Mahayidavaka.

**Pioneers in the Abolition of Slavery:**— Not only had the LMS missionaries attempted a great deal for the spiritual and physical wellbeing of the hungry and the starving and the ignorant masses in south Travancore but the liberation of the slaves of caste people also. To do away with the system of slavery in those days was an adventurous task and a revolutionary attempt which could kindle the wrath and opposition of the high caste landed gentry because it was a necessary institution of the society.

The system of slavery was inevitable and unavoidable due to the fact that the out-castes and the untouchables were the cultivators and chief producers of food. Their emancipation meant the upset of the economy. It was also at time notorious for the existence of slave trade. The slaves were quite often sold and bought like a cattle or community. This was generally known as 'Ooliyam' under which system the slaves were required to work or carry burdens for Sudras generally free of cost. Also they were required to supply free of cost the articles like vegetable and other food provisions for the 'Oottupuras', the free feeding homes for Brahmins. The refusal or even to speak against this system meant physical torture. Seeing the plight of this hapless lot the missionaries beginning from Ringeltaube took the initiative to see that they were liberated from this social evil. The political climate was favourable for the missionaries. The British had the dominance over the Travancore rulers. Thus Charles Mead in 1833 achieved the Royal Proclamation of putting an end to 'Ooliyam' and the system of slavery had for ever been abolished in 1855.

The controversy over the mode of wearing clothes by the lower castes holds an important place in the social history of Travancore. Their women were not allowed to cover their bosom. But, upon the insistence of the missionaries, especially Charles Mead, they began to cover their bosom. This was objected to by Nairs. Upon this issue there took place frequent clashes between these two sections of the society beginning from 1822. This is generally known as 'Mel Mundu Samaram' (Upper Cloth Revolt). After many years of hard work, the L.M.S. missionaries could secure British Imperial Order that Travancore Government should grant freedom for proper wearing of clothes.

**Pioneers in Charitable Service:-** The L.M.S. from the very beginning of its inception into Travancore was engaged in charitable work because they believed that words and deeds should go hand in hand. What Jesus preached, 'blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied', was being translated into action when he fed a big multitude. Heavenly bliss should not be left as a mere eschatological experience, but it can be made meaningful only when that bliss is experienced here and now. This is the reason why the L.M.S. missionaries had ventured on to charitable work as a mark of christian concern for the poor, hungry and marginalized. They rehabilitated the homeless. They established many boarding schools and orphanages for poor children. Their social outlook could be seen from the fact that they never gave importance to the religious background of the children who sought admission to these institutions. The same

policy is being continued by the Dakshina Kerala Mahayidavaka of which the aim is to serve all people irrespective of caste, creed, or nationality and to provide thereby a field of activity for the fullest expression of christian love and compassion to the ministry of caring for the destitute and the handicapped'. The Mahayidavaka runs about twenty five institutions for the rehabilitation of orphans, blind, deaf and dumb, polio-affected and mentally retarded. Under the Compassion Scheme of the Mahayidavaka a few thousands of financially backward children are granted monetary allowance for their education. Through the Integrated Human Development Program (I.H.D.P) of the Mahayidavaka women are trained in cutting and tailoring, flower-making, and such other handicrafts. The Habitat Board helps the poorest people to make available interest free loans through banks to construct houses. The social implication of these institutions, projects, programmes, and schemes is that the beneficiaries are selected on the basis of their economic position. They are inclusive in nature too.

**L.M.S. Politically Motivated:-** The history of the Dakshina Kerala Mahayidavaka reveals that it has made wider contributions to politics also. The L.M.S. community of South Travancore has a rich tradition of their involvement in the local and national politics. Western learning and English education received from the L.M.S. schools helped the people to develop their intellectual faculties. As a result of this they began to be aware of their rights as Indian citizens. Their involvements in politics were in different ways. There were occasions when the Church itself took initiative to participate in political activities like staging demonstrations against government policies, which they thought, would have adverse effects on them. An example to cite in this context is the Church's stance against the educational policy of the Travancore Government in the 1940's when the State Government declared its intention to assume full control of the Primary Education, the Church Council campaigned against it as it envisaged complete elimination of private agencies from the field of education. There were other instances too. Also there were individual Christians, the products of the L.M.S. work, who participated in the current political activities. They included both clergy and lay members. Many clergy believed that political involvement was also a sacred duty when they identified themselves with the people in their struggles for justice. The Rev. M. Sathyananadan had been instrumental in winning over clergy's support for the 'Nivarthana Prasthanam', because he believed that the Travancore Diwan's reforms had adversely affected the Christians of that time. Later the Rev. N. Stephen was the President of the Backward Class Christian Federation, a Christian dalit organization of Kerala. In 1950 he led a delegation to the then Prime Minister of India, Sri. Jawaharlal Nehru demanding constitutional protection for Christian Dalits. Also he led sathyagrahas

at the gate of the Secretariat during the Chief Ministership of Parur T.K. Narayana Pillai in 1950 demanding free education for Christian Dalit Children. As a result of these agitations they achieved it in 1957. Another leader of the Christian Dalits, the Rev. J. Lukose even contested the Kerala Assembly election from the Kottarakara constituency as an Independent candidate supported by the B.C.C.F. in 1960. Again another leader J. Philipose contested in 1964. Mention should also be made that there were many L.M.S. Christians who having nationalist feeling, even went to the extent of vehemently criticizing the British Imperialism in India. V. Ezardas who once was the Secretary of the Travancore Church believed that the very presence of the British in India was an obstacle to progress. A Nesamony who was member of the Sree Moolam Assembly during 1945-1948 and a Member of Parliament, and M. Wilson, who actively participated in State politics, were all products of the L.M.S. Other important names to be mentioned from the present Kerala context are that of A. Charles, a former M.P. and V.J. Thankappan, who was a State Minister for some time, are all members of the Dakshina Kerala Mahayidavaka.

The brief historical survey on the L.M.S. work in Kerala for the last two centuries brings us to the knowledge that the L.M.S. Church did and continues to contribute

very much to the progress and development of the people of Kerala in different ways. The diffusion of learning and education contributed greatly to the liberating process. It helped people realize their position in society. If education helped the liberation of people from ignorance, illiteracy, and slavery, medical work and charitable services have been a source of comfort to the patients, destitute, homeless and orphans. The impact of such activities is the moulding of responsible citizens from them. L.M.S. involvement in politics is an evidence for the Church's concern for the establishment of justice and righteousness. While the Dakshina Kerala Mahayidavaka of the Dakshinenthia Sabha (Church of South India-C.S.I.) is proud of its various kinds of involvement for the last two centuries in the task of nation building it is quite natural to remember those heroes-both European and Indian leaders whose toils in the past had never been unproductive and ineffective. Also the leadership given by the first Keralite Bishop, the late Rt. Rev. V. William, the former Bishop the Most Rev. I. Jusudasan and the present Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Samuel Amirtham, the architects of the modern strong community, whose social concern and wider vision of a just society will be remembered for ever.

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## OBITUARIES

We are sorry to announce the sad demise of four Bishops of the CSI within a short span of two months.

1. Bishop J.D. Jathanna, retired Bishop of Karnataka Central Diocese, on 25th June 1996
2. Bishop Prabhudas, retired Bishop of Karimnagar Diocese, on 12th July 1996
3. Bishop D.N. Samuel, Bishop of Dornakal Diocese, on 13th July 1996.
4. Bishop Devasahayam, retired Bishop of Karimnagar, on 20th August 1996

News has been received that the following former missionaries passed away in the U.K.

1. Dr. Gilbert O Way on 3rd September 1996 at the age of 77. He served in the Dornakal Diocese 1955-1971.

2. Miss. Margaret Lamb on 25th June 1996. She served in Redfer Memorial Hospital, Mysore, 1964-1971.
3. Mrs. Erid Bethel on 14th August 1996 at the age of 86. She served in Hyderabad, 1939-1941.
4. Miss Eva C. Mary on 1st April 1996, aged 83. She served in Secunderabad 1938-1955.
5. Mrs. Dora Stafford on 24th May 1996. She served in Hyderabad 1931-1948.
6. Mrs. Evelyn Lefever on 18th August 1966. She served in Rayalseema, South Travancore and Mysore, 1932-1954.

# Bible Studies on Spiritual Renewal: Notes

## Study One:

### The Need of Spiritual Renewal:

*the church needs to feel the need of revival*

We need to be revived daily to follow God's way—  
*Ps. 119.37 give me life in your ways*

We need to be renewed in God's righteousness—  
*Ps. 119.40  
give me life in righteousness*

We need to be renewed in faith—2Tim. 1.5-6  
*faith in successive generations*

We need to be renewed in truth—2Pet. 1.13  
*to refresh the memory about the truth*

We need to be renewed in the joy of our salvation—  
*Ps. 51.12 restore to me the joy of salvation*

We need to be renewed in the heart and spirit—  
*Ps. 51.10 Create in me a clean heart O God and  
put a new and right spirit within me*

We need to be renewed in the spirit of our mind—  
*Eph. 4.23 renewed in the spirit of your mind*

We need to be renewed for God's own name sake—  
*Ps. 143.11 for your name's sake O Lord preserve  
my life*

We need to be renewed in God's work—  
*Hab. 3.2 in our own time*

## Study Two:

### Spiritual Renewal is Conditional:

We need to be humble—Isa. 57.15; Ps. 34.18  
*The Lord is near to the broken hearted and saves  
the crushed in spirit*

We need to be contrite—Math. 5.4; Luke 15.20

We must confess our sins—Hos. 5.14-15; 6.1-2

We must wait on God—Isa. 40.31

### Results of Spiritual Renewal:

We rejoice in God—Ps. 85.6 *the result is joy*

We keep God's word—Ps. 119.88 *spare my life*

We have the spirit of praise—Ps. 107.1-9, 103.1-5

We have the renewal of worship—Ezra 9.8-9  
*give us a stake in your holy place*

We have the spirit of prayer—Ps. 80.18  
*give us life, we will call on your name*

Renewal gives us strength—Isa. 40.31

### Renewal has necessary influence on communities:

e.g. Korean Church the fast growing church; and  
South America-Basic Christian Communities providing  
spiritual nurture and witness for the gospel.

## Study Three:

### Signs of Spiritual Renewal

a. *Deepening Prayer Life-Speaking to God*  
Prayer is conversation with God—Clement of Alexandria

*Prayer is the voice of faith*  
In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart—John Bunyan

b. *Understanding the Word of God-Listening to God*  
Renewal comes by God's word—Ps. 119.49-50;  
93; John 6.63; Ps. 19.7  
Renewal comes by the Holy Spirit —Titus 3.5;  
Acts 1.8; 1Cor. 2.4

God's word quickens us—Ps. 119.25

God's word sanctifies us—John 17.17

God's word cleanses us—Ps. 119.9

God's word is precious—1Sam. 3.1 -the word of the Lord was rare in those days

God's word is piercing—Heb. 4.12 -scanning of life

God's word is powerful—Jer. 23.29

### We need to:

love the word—Ps. 119.97 -*meditation all day long*

Search the word—John 5.39 -*search scriptures for life*

feed on the word—Jer. 15.16 -see the imagery

hold on to the word—Titus 1.9 -*have a firm grasp of the word-be able to preach*

preach it -2Tim. 4.2

meditate on it -Ps. 119.15

delight in it -Ps. 119.16

c. *Sharing Christian Love -Abiding in God*

d. *Witnessing to God's Love -Speaking for God*

e. *Strengthening Spiritual Foundations - Building the Body of Christ*

### Practical Implications:

*Spiritual Renewal comes through worship and prayer*

1. Prayer in the family-a family that prays together stays together. Prayer cells of families in localities will lead to building of fellowships of caring and sharing.
2. Bible study in the family-Listening and obeying the word of God leads to understanding of the scriptures. Bible study cells of families in the vicinities will provide growing in the understanding of the Christian faith and life. Church will consist of families rooted in the Word of God.

3. Worship in the family and with other families together will create Worship cells of families. Then there will be Worshipping families in the church.

4. Action groups of families for celebration of festivals, sharing common concerns and becoming involved in action: Action oriented family cells will be created.

5. Special Sundays for the celebration of mothers, fathers, parents, children and youth etc. Celebrating families.

6. Spontaneity in worship through songs, prayers etc.

7. Freedom in worship-clapping, singing, dancing, etc.

8. Make worship exciting, varied and memorable.

9. Use creative imagination in preparation of liturgy and conducting of worship.

10. Let worship be a celebration and a service for God and humanity and rest of the creation.

Spiritual renewal is a continuous process.

....be transformed by the renewing of your minds.  
Romans 12.1-2

REV. DR. P. SURYA PRAKASH



## ***Nature – the Paradise of Life***

1. Nature is the gift of God. But even knowing that we destroy the nature by cutting down trees. There is so much of pollution with smoke from cars, lorries, buses, scooters etc.

2. We have to learn a lot from nature, because we still don't know how much God struggled to make the loving beautiful world for us with beautiful trees, flowers etc.

3. We must know without nature, there is nothing better than that. Why do we pluck flowers and sell them in the market ? Flowers look much better when they are

on the trees or plants. Why do we destroy a bird's life by caging it or putting it in a box with small holes? Why do we take them away from their nests ? We do it because we don't know the life of a bird.

4. Why do we kill wild animals? We don't know them. All animal hunting must be stopped because, India already lost its lions and soon there will be no tigers.

5. What about the killing of cows and horses for their leather and hair for dolls? Why don't we stop all this and make the world better for you and me?

SARAH PRATHIBHA  
8 years Bangalore

# *The Church of South India Golden Jubilee 1947-1997*

*Come, Let Us Celebrate Our Unity*

## **Jubilee Programmes:**

Thanksgiving Services

Setting a Sunday as Jubilee Sunday

Seminars and Consultations

Spiritual Renewal Workshops

Renewal and Reconciliation Moves

Jubilee Processions

Cultural Programmes

Public Meetings and Jathras

Felicitations

Fund Raising Schemes for Jubilee Projects

Publication of Jubilee Souvenir

Printing of Posters, Brochures, Bookmarks etc.

Sale of Jubilee Products for Endowments and Projects

Releasing of a Special Jubilee Stamp

Pastors' Conventions in the Regions and at Synod Level

Inviting the former missionaries to attend the Jubilee functions

Special Programmes of the Children, Youth and Women

Programmes for the Formation of Pastors and Laity

Documentation of the Celebrations.

## **Jubilee Projects:**

Endowments for Mission, Evangelism and Development

Liberation of at least fifty families in each Diocese from utter poverty

Housing Projects for the Homeless

Increasing the total number of pastors

Video production on the life and work of the church

Writing the History of the CSI and the Dioceses

Publication for a Multi-Lingual Lyric Book

Revision of the Book of Common Worship

Publication of a Jubilee Book of Theological Reflections

Production of the CSI Catechesis and Bible Studies

Publication of a Directory of the CSI.

Review of the Life and Work of the CSI.

*Join in the Celebrations of the Golden Jubilee*

At

the congregational, Pastorate, Diocesan and Synod Levels throughout the Jubilee year

## **Final Celebrations:**

At the Diocesan Level: September 19-21, 1997

At the Synod Level: September 26-28, 1997

**The Most Rev. Dr. Vasant P. Dandin**

*Moderator*

**Prof. George Koshy**

*General Secretary*

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### CSI becomes a member of the World Methodist Council

The World Methodist Conference, which meets once in five years, was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 7th to 14th August 1996. At the meeting of the Council held during the Conference, the Church of South India was admitted as a member of the Council.

The CSI sought membership in the World Methodist Council in accordance with its policy of maintaining close relations with World Confessional Bodies with which it has traditional links. CSI is also a member of the Anglican Consultative Council, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Council for World Mission and the Association of Missions and Churches in South West Germany.

### Catholics want end to priest's celibacy rule

Most Roman Catholics in England and Wales want their church to allow priests to marry, according to a poll taken by a weekly newspaper, the Catholic Herald. The poll indicated that 69 per cent of Catholics in England and Wales think the church should put an end to compulsory celibacy of priests.

ENI BULLETIN

### Woman priest in Rome

Rome has its first woman priest. But she is an Anglican priest. Ruth Cecilia Erazo was ordained priest

on 3rd November 1996 at the Episcopal Church in Rome by Bishop Jeffery Rowthorn who said 'We are not trying to send a message to the Vatican. We are trying to be faithful to what the Spirit is saying to us.'

Cecilia Erazo and her husband who is also a priest originally came to Rome from Ecuador, and are working mainly among the Latin Americans in Rome.

ENI BULLETIN

### Archbishop Tutu, a 'trouble-maker'

The Philippines Government put Archbishop Desmond Tutu on a list of 'potential trouble-makers', as part of security preparations for the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation summit beginning on 25th November. The 'banned' list included several prominent people and Human Rights advocates, including Nobel Prize Winners, who were reported to be attending an anti-APEC conference at the same time as the APEC Conference. Though Archbishop Tutu was invited to this meeting he had no plans of visiting Philippines. The prime Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines has written to the Philippines President expressing his indignation at news reports that Archbishop Tutu was included in the government's list of potential trouble-makers. 'I urge the government to stop labelling advocates of freedom as trouble-makers', he said.



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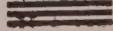
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